

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VANCOU 01111 312255Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 L-03 NSC-05
PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20 DOTE-00 FMC-02 CG-00
DLOS-09 OES-09 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 MCT-02 IO-14
/134 W

-----054655 021319Z /43

R 312210Z AUG 78
FM AMCONSUL VANCOUVER
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4493
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

UNCLAS VANCOUVER 1111

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EWWT, ELAB, CA
SUBJECT: LABOR PROBLEMS IN VANCOUVER PORT

REF: VANCOUVER A-26 OF NOVEMBER 30, 1977

1. A WALKOUT BY A SMALL NUMBER OF NATIONAL HARBORS BOARD (NHB) EMPLOYEES WHICH STARTED ON AUGUST 25 COULD EVENTUALLY LEAD TO SIGNIFICANT DISRUPTIONS IN VANCOUVER S PORT OPERATIONS. THE 74 OFFICE WORKERS AND 62 "OUTSIDE" OR MAINTENANCE WORKERS ARE MEMBERS OF LOCAL 517 OF THE INTERNATIONAL LONGSHOREMEN S AND WAREHOUSEMEN S UNION (ILWU), AND WALKED OUT WHEN MANAGEMENT REFUSED, INTER ALIA, TO MEET THEIR DEMAND FOR PAY PARITY WITH THE LONGSHOREMEN (BASE RATE OF DOLS9.10 PER HOUR).

2. WHILE PORT TRAFFIC HAS APPARENTLY NOT SUFFERED SERIOUSLY YET, IMPORTS WILL FEEL THE FIRST IMPACT AS THE INTERRUPTION IN THE PAPERWORK MAKES CUSTOMS CLEARANCE IMPOSSIBLE. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THAT SOME SHIPS ARE ALREADY BEING DIVERETED TO SEATTLE. AN OFFICIAL OF THE NATIONAL HARBORS BOARD CONFIRMED THIS TO US, NOTING THAT
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THE MAIN PROBLEM SO FAR IS CONTAINER VESSELS, SINCE THERE IS NO WAY TO PROCESS AND MOVE THE CONTAINERS FROM THE NHB CONTAINER TERMINAL AFTER UNLOADING. HE CLAIMED THAT IT IS BUSINESS AS USUAL AT THE MANY PRIVATE DOCKS, INCLUDING THE BULK FACILITIES WHICH ARE KEY TO THE PORT S HEAVY EXPORT VOLUME.

3. LONGSHOREMEN HAVE NOT YET MADE ANY MOVE TO SUPPORT THE STRIKERS, BUT UNCERTAINTY OVER WHAT THE NEXT DEVELOPMENTS MAY BE HAS CAUSED THE VANCOUVER SUN TO EDITORIALIZE THAT "THE SITUATION COULD WELL DETERIORATE TO THE POINT IT WAS AT FOUR YEARS AGO WHEN WORK STOPPAGES AND WILDCATS WERE COSTING THE PORT NOT ONLY CUSTOMERS BUT GOOD WILL AS WELL."
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